WARNING SIGNS: BULLIES MAY BE VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE



Behavioral Signs

- Extreme aggression or frequent outbursts (especially when triggered by minor events)
- Controlling or manipulative behavior
- Cruelty toward animals or younger children
- Frequent lying or stealing
- Bullying that escalates in intensity or frequency
- Sudden changes in friend groups or social withdrawal
- Hyper-awareness of power dynamics or unfairness

Emotional Signs

- Lack of empathy or difficulty showing remorse
- Low self-esteem masked by arrogance or bravado
- Explosive temper or unpredictable mood swings
- Anxiety, depression, or signs of emotional distress
- Fear of being alone or abandoned

Physical & Environmental Clues

- Unexplained injuries or frequent “accidents”
- Neglect in appearance, hygiene, or clothing
- Hesitation to go home or stay after school
- Stories of intense punishment or fear of caregivers
- Witnessing violence or substance abuse at home

Academic & Social Indicators

- Frequent trouble with authority or school staff
- Sudden drops in academic performance
- Detentions, suspensions, or other disciplinary action
- Little or no involvement in positive extracurricular activities

Children who bully aren’t always “bad” kids. Their behavior may mask pain, fear, or neglect. Recognizing the signs early can help turn harm into healing.

Warning signs may vary and are not limited to those listed. Always report any concern or suspected danger to the appropriate authorities.